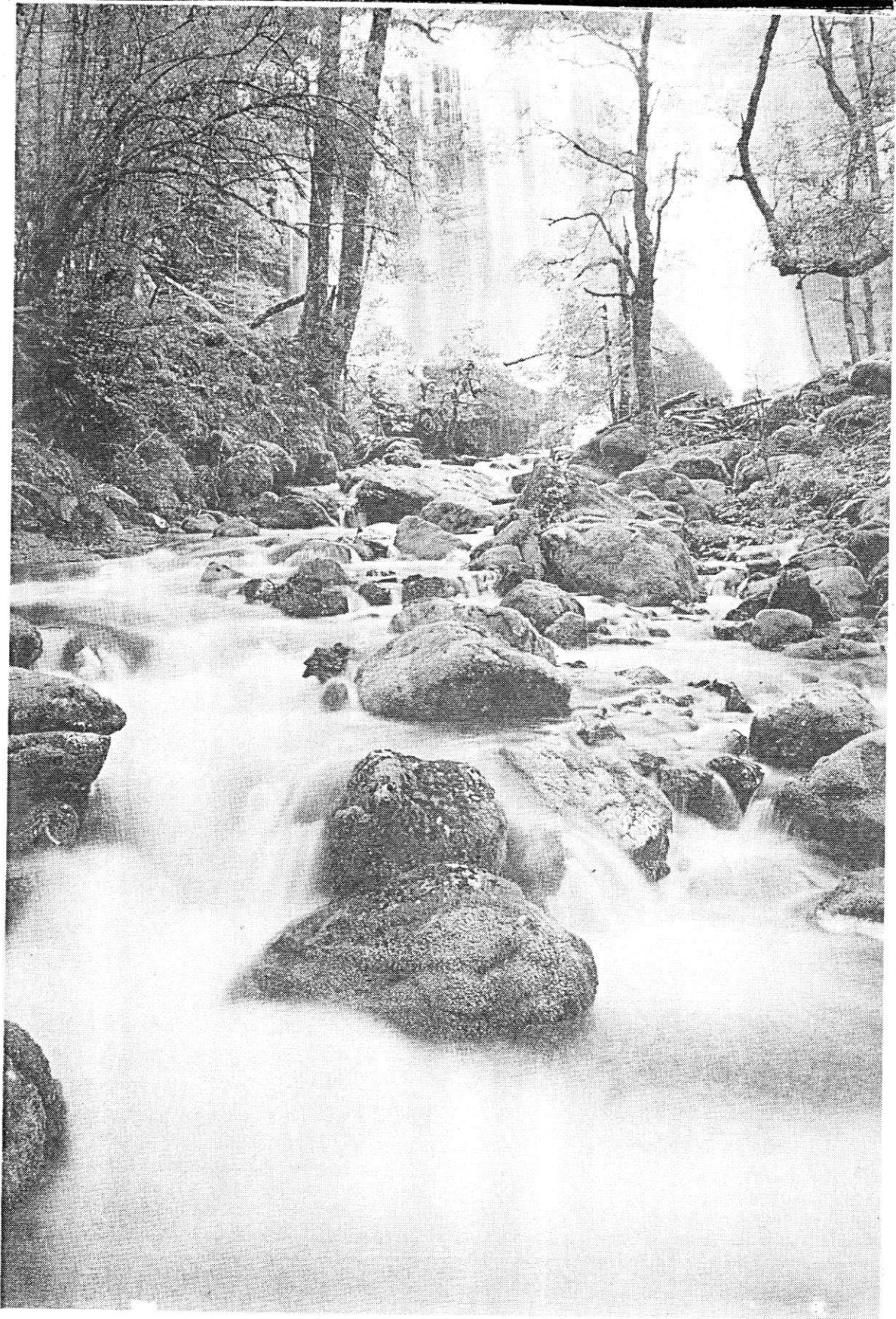


# PRANAMA

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## Supreme Command

Those who perform sadhana twice a day regularly, the thought of Parama Purusa will certainly arise in their minds at the time of death - their liberation is a sure guarantee. Therefore every Ananda Margii will have to perform sadhana twice a day invariably. Verily is this the command of the Lord. Without Yama and Niyama, sadhana is an impossibility. Hence the Lord's command is also to follow Yama and Niyama. Disobedience to this command is nothing but to throw oneself into the tortures of animal life for crores of years. That no one should undergo torments such as these, that everyone might be enabled to enjoy the eternal blessedness under the loving shelter of the Lord, it is the boundenduty of every Ananda Margii to endeavour to bring all to the path of bliss. Verily is this a part and parcel of sadhana to lead others along the path of righteousness.

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

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# Editorial

Some time ago I read of a number of qualities which an ideal leader should possess. The author of these attributes was said to be Ba'ba'. They impressed me greatly and have become a valuable guide in my life. The very first point impressed me the most and read: "You should always think in terms of Ideology and collective interest and never in personal terms. Generally a stroke of difficulty or a blow to personal prestige or position diverts one's attention towards oneself, and the great Ideology is forgotten. This feeling may either be positive or negative but it preoccupies a large portion of the mind and thereby creates too much self-consciousness which makes one lazy and vocal. One then chats about oneself, one's difficulties, one's relations and incidents with persons surrounding oneself. One loses balance of mind. In short, one then thinks all the time about oneself forgetting one's Ideology and task."

In the last of these qualities, a similar selfless dedication to Ideology is expressed: "One must not think for one's own enjoyment but rather always try to arrange for others' enjoyment (just like the relationship between a train-driver and the passengers)."

How wise and refreshingly selfless and magnanimous these ideas are. It is common now in this individualistic society for "my 'needs' first" or "me first" to be the guiding tenets. In my own experience, when this ideological centredness (or God-centredness) is experienced life becomes ever so sweet and dynamic with a strong feeling of Baba's love and presence as a constant guide. All petty worries, reactions, complexes and complications of mind are smoothed over with a joyous simplicity and naturalness. While the ego resists at first, once this ideological centredness is achieved, one often wonders what it was that held one back from this blissful state.

Ba'ba' has said, "If one thinks of obstacles, the obstacles themselves become one's goal, and the actual goal is relegated to the background . . . we have to fight against the internal and external demons. But this does not mean that the demons should become the object of ideation." (Ananda Marga Ideology in a Nutshell).

The science behind this approach is to remove unwanted thoughts or feelings by diverting the mind to something higher. For example, if we have an addiction, we have to occupy the mind with something else, something better. To simply talk about and dwell upon the problem all the time will only compound it, making us more self-centred and vulnerable to clash. And the mind will become more contracted and analytical, losing the power of expanded thinking (integrated perception) and spiritual insight. The ego may feel some relief but the problem (*samskara*) remains and now, because of the attention given, it grows in magnitude.

We can see this same psychology being used in work with street kids. Troubled teenagers are taken to the country, away from the degenerating city environment they are accustomed to. There they are given various physical challenges - for example, rock climbing - where they have to learn to work together and overcome personal fears and negativities. Being away from the negative city environment and its constant pressures, their minds can be diverted from their old negative thought patterns and directed into more character building sentiments and feelings.

Like this, Baba has given us our spiritual practices, organisational work and all the other aspects of the 16 points which expand the mind towards Him and the greater ideology, making us less self-centred.

*"The whole seed of welfare in all the spheres - physical, mental, moral, social and spiritual - are embedded in the 16 points. Hence be firm in the 16 points."* Ananda Vanii, 1976.

Being ideologically centred or concerned with 16 points does not imply neglecting our real needs because some of the 16 points concern personal needs. Those who 'burn out' usually do so because they have neglected the personal aspects of the 16 points - for example, sadhana, asanas, diet. In serving Baba either internally and externally, the most important thing is what is uppermost in our minds - the desire to please Him totally and unconditionally.

And in order to keep this purity of ideation, it is vital to keep our sadhana healthy and alive. Amongst these qualities for an ideal leader is this one: "You should keep the mind cool and calm every moment. You should never react to stimulus immediately . . . To have a calm and cool mind one needs spiritual practices. Therefore, whatever others may say, your daily spiritual practices should not be reduced or neglected. Without the strength of mind achieved by spiritual practices, nothing great can be accomplished."

By being determined to maintain our spiritual flow during clash, the expression of unpleasant *samskaras* are speeded up and we in turn gain strength and growth without degeneration. To compromise our ideology - the sixteen points - during clash is to invite degeneration (*Avidya*).

Baba once remarked that the greatest crisis facing humanity today is the lack of proper leadership. If we can strive to develop in ourselves more of these qualities, we may come to understand what Ba'ba' means by this "proper leadership". Then, like the ideal train driver, we will only feel happy when everyone else is happy.

Na'rada Muni



# Taking the Opposite Stance in Battle (cont.)

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

"... The position of devotion is above action and knowledge. Action comes next and knowledge comes last. Take, for example, the case of the series of seminars that were held in 1970. A great deal of knowledge was disseminated through these seminars and, as a result of this spread of knowledge, then some vanity developed. Usually vanity grows when a person feels to have learned much.

The next year was the year of utilization or karma (action). If there is action there cannot be lethargy, and automatically devotion will come. So if there is knowledge followed by action, that knowledge will be free from its defects of lethargy and vanity. In practical life knowledge is important, but at the same time one must guard against the natural defects that may originate from knowledge. This is why Caetanya Mahaprabhu said,

*Trn'a'dapi suniicena taroriva  
sahis'n'nuna  
Ama'ninam' ma'nadeyam' kiir-  
taniya sada' harih.*

"One should be as humble as the grass and as tolerant as the trees; one should give respect to those whom no one respects, and always do kiirtan to the Lord."

Vanity harms the mind in three ways: *abhima'na* or inflated ego, *gaorava* or self-aggrandizement, and *pratis'tha* or prestige. The word *abhima'na* is not used in a derogatory sense in Bengali. When someone is hurt mentally, we call it *abhima'na*. But the Sam'skrta word *abhima'na* is not used in the same sense: *ma'na*

means "honour" and *abhima'na* means "honour in a pervasive sense". When a person expects greater honour from another person but does not receive it, then his or her reaction is called *abhima'na*.

Suppose someone goes to a place and the people there do not give proper respect to him or her: such a person will feel slighted and she or he will have a severe psychic reaction. This is called *abhima'na*. I told you the story of one of our Acaryas who was a senior officer in the

*Trn'a'dapi suniicena taroriva sahis'n'nuna  
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tolerant as the trees; one should give respect to  
those whom no one respects, and always do  
kiirtan to the Lord.'*

Agricultural Department in Bihar. Once when his higher officer came, the Acarya became rather nervous; he did everything for his officer but he forgot to do namaskar to him. The officer said, "What sort of gentleman are you! I am your higher authority and you did not do namaskar to me!" Obviously the officer's pride was wounded and on some false pretext he issued a charge-sheet against the Acarya. But do you know what the outcome was? Before our Acarya could even reply to the charge sheet, the officer was dismissed from his job because the anti-corruption squad caught him red-handed accepting a large amount of money as a bribe! This is an example of *abhima'na*: usually the consequences of *abhima'na* are always bad.

The second is *gaorava*, self-aggrandizement or boasting - projecting oneself as a great personality. Suppose in one's garden there is a big rose; obviously the owner of the garden will boast to other people about the size of the rose. Perhaps the flower was as big as a fig, but the owner will describe it as huge.

The third is *pratis'tha*, self-glorification or hankering after prestige. Human beings are made of flesh and bones. If their heart or lungs stop functioning, then they will have no other option but to climb onto the funeral pyre. When this is the situation of human beings, where is the scope for self-glorification? Thus the spiritual aspirants say,

*Abhima'nam sura'pa'nam  
gaoravam' raoravam'  
dhravam'*

*Pratis'tha' shu'kari-  
ivis'tha' trayam' tyak'tva' harim  
bhajet.*

"*Abhima'na* is like drinking wine; *gaoravam* leads one into the deepest hell, and *pratis'tha* is like the excrement of a pig. Give up all these three and only sing the glories of the Lord."

What is this *abhima'na*? It is as bad as drinking wine. Now you may say, "Is drinking wine so bad that we should condemn it?" Smoking cigarettes and chewing betel are not so much condemned in society as wine is. The reason is that the most precious treasure of human beings is their intelligence, their wisdom, their discriminating judgement, and their conscience. But after drinking alcohol, all these faculties are temporarily paralyzed. So the food and drink



that spoils the greatest treasure - the human mind, the thinking power - is undoubtedly condemnable. Thus it is universally agreed that drinking is bad. And this abhima'na or false sense of vanity is as condemnable as drinking wine.

*Gaoravam' raoravam' dhruvam:* *Gaorava* means to project oneself to be greater than one actually is. In fact, is there anything of which human beings can be legitimately proud? You know, within this small human cranium there is a small brain composed of some nerve cells. Is this really something great of which human beings can feel proud? And what is the result of this self-glorification? *Gaorava* means the seventh hell.

You know that according to the comparative crudity or subtlety of existence there are seven stages: *bhurloka* (physical world), *bhuvarloka* world of becoming, *svarloka*, *maharloka*, *janarloka*, *taparloka* and *satyaloka*.

Had these been still cruder forms in that case they would be *tala*, *atala*, *tala'tala*, *pa'ta'la*, *atipa'tala*, and *rasa'tala*. So the seventh hell is *rasa'tala*, the very crudest of all stages of existence. Obviously in that state human beings are no longer human beings: their minds, their intellects are reduced to extreme crudity, a stage of no return. Similarly, people start becoming degraded, a stage comes when they can no longer elevate themselves; *rasa'tala* is such a state.

*Pratis't'ha' shu'karivis't'ha:* Human beings come onto this earth only for a short while: after this stipulated period, they will depart. All entities in

this world merely come and go; nothing is fixed - everything is moving, and thus this universe is called *jagat* (root verb *gam + kvip = jagat*). *Jagat* means that which has the characteristic of ceaselessly moving on. Another synonym for the word "world" is *sam'sa'ra* (*sam' - sr + ghan*), "that which constantly changes its place". When nothing ever ceases to move, then can you remain permanently in this world? Even the effort to establish oneself permanently in this world is unnatural, because this *prist'ht'a'* is as abominable as the stool of a sow. Hence one should give up all these three - *abhima'na* or inflated ego, *gaorava* or self-aggrandizement, and *pratis't'a* or desire for prestige - and worship the Lord.

*Trayam' tyaktva' Harim' bhajet.* Here *Hari* means *Parama Purus'a*. You know *hari* is a favourite name of *Parama Purus'a*: *harati pa'pa'n ityarthe Hari* - "one who steals the sins of His devotees is *Hari*." Is it not absurd to call *Hari* a thief? Hence the fact is that only the devotees can come in close contact with *parama Purus'a* and not a philosopher (*jina'ni*), because the devotees' main goal of life is to serve *Parama Purus'a*. Now to serve *Parama Purus'a*, the devotees cannot remain away from Him. A philosopher or a person of action always maintains some distance from Him - they do not come closest to Him. They cherish a certain degree of awe in their minds for *Parama Purus'a*: "My Lord is the Supreme! How Great He is! How then can I go near Him? Let me rather remain a bit away from Him."

In this connection let me recount an old story from the *Mahabharata*. You know that when *Draupadi* was disrobed by *Duhshasana*, she was praying to *Nara'yan'a*, "Oh *Nara'yan'a*, save me, save me!" But although *Draupadi* was in great trouble, still she was clutching her dress at her waist with one hand, and with the other hand upraised she was beseeching the Lord to save her. But the Lord did not at once come to her rescue. Then *Laxmii* said to *Nara'yan'a*, "Your devotee is entreating you so piteously - why do you refuse to help her?" The Lord answered, "No, her self-surrender is not yet complete." You remember, when *Draupadi* found that there was no way to save her prestige, she threw both her hands up in the air in utter helplessness, without even trying to hold her clothes, calling pitifully, "Oh Lord, now you must save me!" And only then did the Lord immediately come to her rescue, for whereas previously she had personally tried to save herself from such a fate, now her self-surrender was complete. Similarly, all devotees must try to attain such total self-surrender as *Draupadi* did.

Calcutta, November 29, 1970

DMC Discourse

The final part of this article will appear in the next edition of **Pranam.**

# "I am Always Ten Steps Ahead"

Ac Alokanda Avt

Prior to coming to Suva Sector, I was assigned the additional role of Diocese Secretary in India. The duty was to do *pracar* in the districts where there were no Margiis. The target was to initiate at least 50 people. I went to these districts with an extremely positive mind, determined to fulfil His Mission there.

I stayed at a temple for about seven days. From there I contacted people and talked to them about their physical and mental problems, also about spirituality. As they had not come into contact with such a rational and scientific approach to spirituality before, they were very happy to hear about our philosophy. I think they felt very close to Ananda Marga.

I had a fear of addressing large numbers of people. Nevertheless, I went to a High School and approached the staff about giving lectures there. The Head Master gave me an opportunity to address 400 students the next day. This I did, applying Baba's second lesson. The lecture was very successful and there were a lot of initiations.

After that there was a complete polarization of the

people there - some supported me while others discouraged me. I got tremendous courage by surrendering my whole existence to Ba'ba', thinking that I had to do more and more work for His Mission. Then I went to a Post Graduate College and again gave lectures, this time to 300 students and their staff. There were 20 initiations. After that I went to a Degree College and initiated another 10 people, including the Yoga and Science teachers. All were very happy after their initiation. At the temple, still more people received initiation.

During those days, I felt very much that I was just an instrument, a vehicle for Him to get his work done. I was in ecstasy all the time, submerged in an ocean of bliss. When I walked I felt that I was walking above the earth. There was no distinction between Ba'ba' and myself, there was only one feeling - that I am Parama Purusa and every minute entity is intimately mine. After I had given lectures or talks, I could not remember what I had said; Ba'ba' was expressing Himself through me. Ba'ba' once said that if you go

one step ahead for the benefit of My Mission, then I will go ten steps ahead to help you.

Now I realize that these experiences were due to my strong determination to fulfil His Mission. To do my duty, I will utilize my capacities for Him, the One who has given me these capacities. He is with us always, we only have to realize His grace, which is already there. This comes from a strong desire to do service for Him. So all our significant desires should be for Him. As much as we give our existence to Him, He also gives His realization, feeling and experience to us. This is the eternal truth. Nobody can break the relationship between *Bhakta* (devotee) and *Bhagavan* (Lord), Guru and *shis'ya*, Master and disciple. It is His *liila*, His eternal game. The secret behind enjoying His *liila* is to surrender completely, one hundred per cent - at His lotus feet. Then the unit mind will merge into the Cosmic flow, and that Cosmic flow will make your heart, and the hearts of others, flourish. So let us be a convenient vehicle to carry His victory banner!

# There is No Escape !

## Manorainjana

In this life, Oh Lord, there is no escape from You. I try to hide behind duty and work. I try to seek solitude in business. I try to create safe little recesses in my mind to conceal myself, by working on a rational, premeditated course of cautious self improvement. "I want You," my heart cries. "Follow me," says the mind, who then proceeds to pick out a tedious and haphazard path through the swamp of life.

Thankfully, You save me from myself. The swamp is hit with full force by a cosmic tidal wave. My safe recess is torn from me and I am cast unceremoniously into the brazen light of Your spiritual dawn.

Ever watchful, You provide the scrutiny needed to keep Your sam'skara mill turning. Oh Vigilant One, no opportunity for progress is left untouched - situations emerge from the most placid, most tranquil surrounds to challenge, to provoke the sluggish spirit into action. When the eyes droop at night, You come as a comet to dazzle the mind. When the mind becomes absorbed in the fog of maya, You come as a prophet to goad me on.

You provide responsibility and a field of action; You bestow duty and a cause; You create the mission and leave us to fulfill it. You urge me on with lofty words, You quicken my pace with the

sufferings of maya; Your smile and eyes lure me on.

When I try to turn my back on the world, You make my family crowd around. They share their joys and sufferings with me. I cannot look away, I join their dance for Your pleasure. Our laughter and tears are all the same to You. We, Your children, sing for You. On my voice is Your name only: in my eyes, Your smile.

What are obstacles but jewels on the way? I have a crown of jewels and each one is for You. I must tread the path to bring You this prize. There is no escape.

## *Song of the Heart*

*If I were to hide in a cave, Lord,  
You would seek me out,  
send a beggar, bowl outstretched,  
to my door.*

*If I were to take cover in a flower  
Your bees would break the solitude,  
Your birds and other flying things  
would find me there.*

*Hiding in the shades of night  
I still find the dark filled  
with bats and stars,  
moonbeams and shadows.*

*Where ever I go,  
whatever retreat I make,  
You bring Your maya to me.*



*You make me give alms to the beggar  
and nectar to the bee;  
You give me the courage to  
confront the shadows of the night.*

*There is no mountain hideout,  
no eagle's eyrie free of mice.  
There is no place where You don't follow.  
When I seek out the silence  
in order to seek out You,  
You drag the din and bustle of life  
in on me.*

*It is in this hubbub that You reside.  
I find You there in the pulsing heart  
and dance of Your creation.  
I needn't take a step, needn't move,  
for You to be with me.  
This is Your lesson.*

*You are teaching me that  
if I carry the silence of the  
mountain peak in my heart and the  
majesty of a pristine dawn in my eyes,  
I will find them in  
the hearts and eyes of others,  
in dusty city streets,  
in the struggles of Your play.*

*There is no escaping,  
no hiding, no wall  
strong or high enough  
to keep You out.*

*I am Yours,  
I cannot resist You.*

*- Manorainjana*

# Blissful Remembrance

## Jayanti

As the first year of my spiritual life without Baba's physical presence draws to a close, my mind is flooded with blissful remembrances of my Guru's physical form and I am drawn to contemplation of what He was and is.

Now that He is no longer with us physically, these remembrances become the most precious jewels, guarded and treasured within our inner hearts - within His abode. Guarded, not as relics of the past, but as fuel to stoke the fire of love, burning and consuming within. Consuming our hearts and souls, insatiable, driving us desperately on and on to final consummation.

Now that He is no longer with us physically, I can understand the force that drove me, sometimes like a mad person, to seek His physical contact. I can understand the force that pushed me on the plane to India when I least wanted to go, which dragged me to His house at midnight to catch one last glimpse of Him before I slept. A force that would not allow comfortable complacency, but which made me crave the sight of Him.

I understand now that

everything in this physical world is limited - even His physical form. And the urge that I felt was the urge to gather the fuel for the fire of my soul while it lay on the ground, ungathered, so that my fire would burn and burn.

And now, as I remember, the flames spring up afresh,

ly. A tiny figure, barely visible to the eye, but stirring love within.

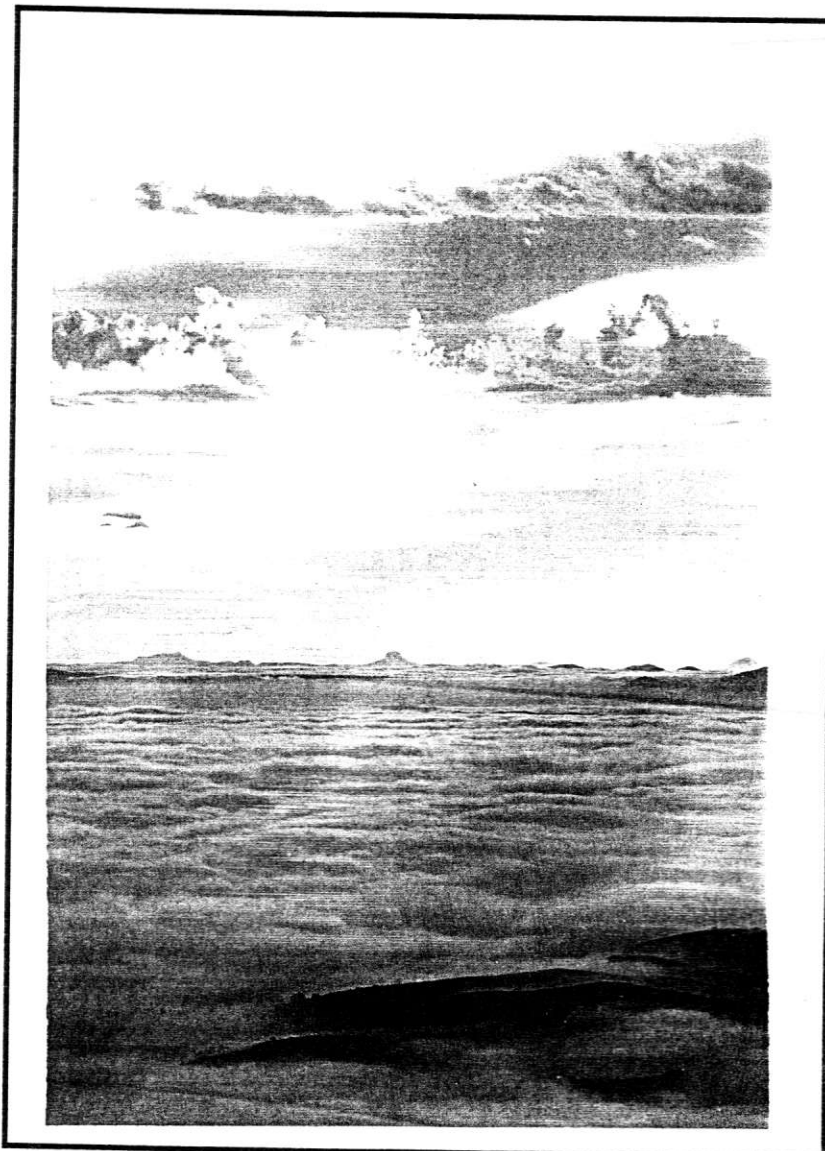
In the garden of Your house at Tiljala - in March. Framed by lush palms, the sound of birds - cool beauty. You are close, but still I use my binoculars and You appear more and more close. Your skin - smooth,

soft, a gentle rose glow - so gentle, so attractive. Others are there, yet their presence fades and I am alone with You. Immersed in the tropical paradise You have created in my heart. Just as You have turned the dry desert of Ananda Nagar to a tropical haven, so You have with my heart - flooded with the monsoon rains, awash with love.

At Lake Gardens, on moonlit nights, we gathered at Your feet, to sing You Prabhat Samgiti to You. You asked us for words to express You songs "Enchanting," offered - and You accepted. My heart thrilling at Your word floated toward

me and mine towards You. Small words, but a symbolic expression of what existed and exists within.

At Ranchi, You were at home, at ease, resting after DMC



revived by each remembrance.

You walk atop the roof of Your house at Ananda Nagar, shaded by an umbrella. We watch in the heat of the day - in May. Melting, externally and internal-

I saw You beneath the curtain of Your door, dressed casually in a woollen pullover - so comfortable, so ordinary, and yet so endearing. I sang for You - out of tune and out of place, but You responded and explained the meaning of my awkwardly sung song. Standing before me, soothing my shyness, and replacing it with the unfathomable depths of Your vibration.

In the majesty of Your varabhaya mudra, You stirred my heart to depths I had not known before. Vibration flooded my mind, emanating from You. Like a wave rolling, then breaking on my ajina cakra - with the whole force of the Universal ocean, I was touched. You have placed Your stamp upon my forehead, indelibly imprinted in love. I am Yours forever. Again and again You allowed me to perceive You in this form - each time different, but each time . . . through Your mudra, came all the vibrations of the Universe, of You - Infinite peace, the force of the Destroyer, Maheshvara, the regeneration of the Generator. And I would leave You - renewed, revived, and revealed.

Your hands upon my head, vibration soothing through my sahasrara cakra; my hand gently brushing Your neck as I placed a garland upon You - indescribably soft. The sweetest scent emanating from You as I walked close behind as You descended the stairs.

As the few short years have passed, these few physical contacts You allowed me have waned and You have withdrawn deeper inside of me - so that our love can be expressed in the

privacy of our sadhana - in Your Guru Cakra.

A gentle touch from outside would send waves within. You spoke of *laghima* in Your DMC discourse. As I left the pandal after Your mudra, I understood this *laghima* - this lightness. My mind fully floated on the lightness. I was simple, free, flowing. And as I walked in the midnight air at Ananda Nagar, a brisk breeze blew, stirring the dusty earth around me. Each dust particle filled with Your blissful vibration, dancing and playing around me. I was in Vrindavan - free and loving, light, surrounded by these blissful particles of You.

You laugh and the whole world laughs. I do not understand the joke - it is in Bengali, but still it is funny and I laugh. When You laugh, how can I not be caught by your smiling vibration. So sweet just to share a smile with You.

And when You shout, I am exhilarated. Ever part of me is suddenly alive, alert - the force of the Universe emanates from You.

The wonderful coloured silk shirts, that You sometimes surprise us with - that make You so, so attractive, Everyone gasps as you enter the room, breathless, taken aback by you. A garland placed around Your neck, You give us Your namaskar and sit, eyes closed as You listen to Prabhat Samgita. Your mind is somewhere beyond and mine is stretched and stretched as I try to know just a little of You.

I am at the well at Ananda Nagar, collecting water. Suddenly, my anahata cakra is vibrated. My mind is drawn to You. I walk to

Your house and hear the cries of the workers from inside Your room, the waves from Your Varabhaya mudra. Then again - my anahata cakra is filled and more cries of bliss from Your room. I walk slowly back to my quarters, heady with Your love - and the waves come again - and far off the cries from inside Your room. Thrice blessed - Your Grace is unbounded.

Kneeling before You in Pranam, my life offered at Your feet, my heart pouring forth to You. Will You accept? And You do. I am relieved. I am Yours. I am You.

My last vision of You. I stand alone as You come for evening field walk. 'Mysteriously', no one else is present and I enjoy You alone, physically and internally. Your form covered in a shirt of burnt orange silk - attracting me, inspiring love. Alone in the moonlight I watched You and departed.

O, Mysterious one! who leads me and leads me until I think I have learned something - and then You open yet another door - and leave me breathless, overwhelmed and aware that what I understood to be complete was just the tiniest fraction of the whole. You lead me gently, You lead me sternly, until You reveal the whole.

Now Your body is there no more to inspire, to inflame, but sublimely You exist - and unexpectedly You appear in my mind's eye and in my dreams - the lover of my life's love.

*Vishva yadi cale ya'y ka'ndite ka'ndite  
Eka' a'mi vase rava sam'kalpa sa'dhite*

*Even if this universe disappears crying,  
I will sit alone until I realize my Self.*



# BA'BA' and Ashutos'a

## Ashutos'a

*Timeless Indian Afternoon,  
April full moon,  
The lotus has bloomed,  
The cherished One has come.*

*Here lies the charm of life,  
The cunning devil,  
The exquisite play,  
Delicate and tender,  
Venus in vogue.*

### Sunday Night Darshan

Ba'ba' looks so beautiful, in His baby blue kurta. His golden skin glowing, full of peace. He is sitting for a long time in silence. His massive chest rises and falls. He is completely at ease with His children.

The atmosphere, the plants, the night, awash in bliss. His workers radiant in blazing orange. Now He is playing with His hands - fingers darting in and out, weaving some magic charm. On and on for what seems to be an eternity - the master juggler.

### Sunday Night II

Fasting day. Finally, the bliss has come. I float into His house. He comes and sits, "Bhalo achen?" - "Ha! Ba'ba'" ("Are you well? - Yes Ba'ba'!"). "Thik ache!" He nods and smiles from His heart. He is in fine form tonight.

Protocol. Kaoshikii, Tandava, Prabha't Samgiita. Then, He starts to talk slowly. He talks to a few of His old friends in the front row, a few jokes in Bengali. They are delighted. Now He massages His feet! In front of everyone, for God's

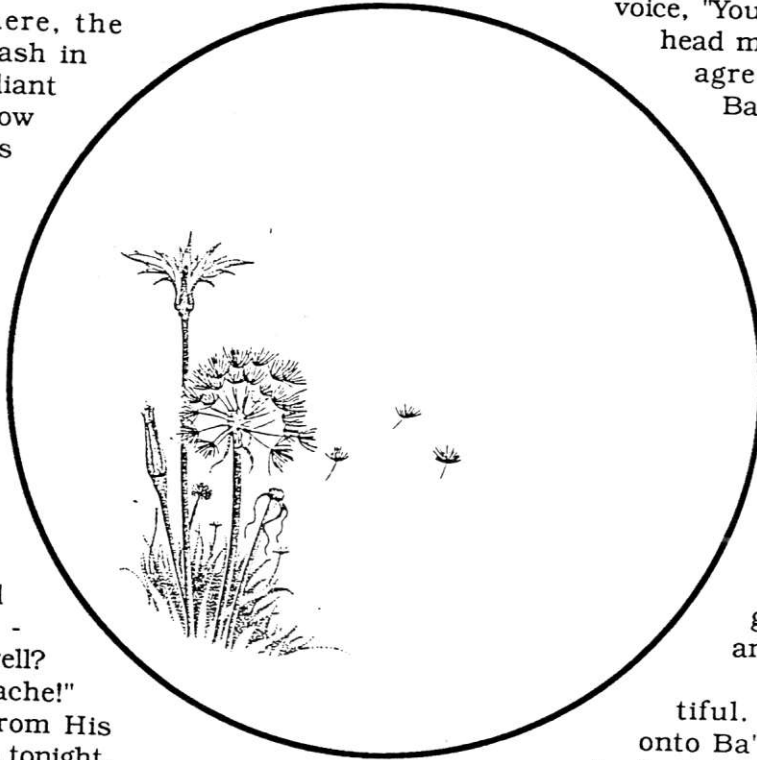
sake! I am totally shocked. The Bliss pours and pours. And He acts so cool, as if it was the most natural thing in the world to do. "Drop them into some really high samadhi. See how they handle that." I have never seen such outrageous seduction. Still, Tantric Guru. . . Who am I to question the behaviour of the embodiment of diplomatic etiquette? Let the bliss flow.

He is saying: "God sees everything, everything, everything!" He says it in a variety of ways and repeats it many times. Then He asks if we understand. Everyone says, "Yes, Ba'ba'". Except me. By His Grace, I didn't. So, I shake my head and whisper to myself, "No, no, I don't get it. I don't understand." Immediately, Ba'ba' spun around, lunged forward pointing His mighty finger at me and boomed in His universe shaking voice, "You understand!". I nod my head most enthusiastically, and agree with everyone. "Yes, Ba'ba', I understand."

Later, Ba'ba' rises to leave. We prostrate on the floor. He is descending. I am underneath. Time stands still . . .

Ba'ba' leaves. Unbelievably, a grasshopper is in the middle of the darshan floor, directly in front of Ba'ba'. Devotees surge forward. I swoop and save the grasshopper, take it out and set it free.

The night is so beautiful. Bishma and I climb onto Ba'ba's roof, to enjoy the fresh air. Two unit beings, sitting on top of Taraka Brahma's house. We look out at His gorgeous garden, the lights dancing on the lake, and the milky way and wonder at our magnificent good fortune, and how best we can share this intense bliss with . . . the universe.



# THE CHILD

*This is the third article in a series of articles about Ba'ba's early life which were written about twenty years ago.*

Arun (the name Ba'ba' was given from birth until the age of five) started showing signs of unusualness at a very early age, much to the worry and dislike of His parents. Even while at His foster-parents' home, reports about His absence from the house, despite a vigilant watch by Radha (His foster-sister), had started pouring in.

Shrii Lakshmi Narayan Sarkar was known to almost everyone in Jamalpur because of his homeopathic dispensary and everyone recognized his son also. A hunter who used to supply birds caught in the Jamalpur forest for table use in the house of Shrii Lakshmi Narayan told various tales to the servants about this little child. The servants complained to Shriimati Abha Rani that the little child should be brought back as there appeared to be no control of Him in the other house. Abha Rani repeated these complaints to her husband. In the beginning, Shrii Lakshmi Narayan did not take any notice, but when the stories started reaching him more frequently, he became worried. Inquiries made of the foster parents only revealed that the child was always in the house or was playing with Radha and her friends in one of the neighbours' compounds. Still, the tales coming to Shrii Lakshmi Narayan could not be disbelieved. So Arun was brought back and it was thought that a strict watch on Him would keep Him confined to the house most of the time.

The hope that Arun could be kept under control in the house was soon proved wrong. The same hunter one day reported that as he was entering the forest just before dawn to catch the early birds, he saw Arun

coming out of the forest. This was repeatedly reported, but it could not be checked as no one could go deep into the forest at night to find out what Arun had been doing there. He would, on questioning, only say that He had been sleeping in His bed all night.

The little one also refused to eat the family food, i.e. meat and fish. He could not stand it and any show of force to make Him eat what was commonly cooked in the house made Him more obstinate. He would not look at fish which the others in the family ate with great relish. This annoyed the parents further, but they thought that it was due to the influence of the foster parents that He had become vegetarian and thought that, after some time, Arun would change and start taking the traditional food. He, however, showed no change. They even tried persuasion by eulogising the great qualities of fish which is supposed to contain phosphorous and certain other elements that directly nourish one's brain and improve the mental capacity besides giving superior physical strength. They would invariably express concern over Arun's lean and thin body and would make it a point to ascribe it to His not eating meat and fish. Nothing, however, could change Arun. Fresh vegetables, milk and fruits had to be arranged for Him or else He would not eat anything at all.

The family tie in India still had a strong hold on people, particularly on those engaged in administrative and intellectual pursuits. The Sarkar family also valued its traditions and tried their best to maintain cohesion in the family. Shrii Lakshmi

Narayan's brother was blessed with a son. He was born on the same day that Shrii Chitta Rainjan Das died. Chitta Rainjan Das was the top political leader of India in the early twentieth century. He was considered the father of the Independence movement in Bengal. It was thought that since the boy was born at the time of his death he should be named after him. This newborn was hence named Chitta Rainjan. This, however, posed a departure from the family tradition of all the boys having similar names. The next brother of Arun had, to match with His name, to be named Barun. The sentiment to stick to the name Chitta Rainjan was so strong that the names of these two boys were changed to names that were similar to Chitta Rainjan. Arun, at about the age of five, hence got a new name. He was called Prabhat Rainjana. This is the name by which He is known all over the world today and which means sun that not only illumines but also fills everything with colour. With the change in His name the trend of His activities also changed.

After the incident at the Shiva Temple, Prabhat had become serious and was most of the time lost in Himself only. His absences from the house, although not noticed so much now, had increased both in duration and frequency. The same hunter reported that as he was returning from the forest in the afternoon one day, he, by the behaviour of small animals around him, felt that a tiger was near. He quickly climbed a tree to let the tiger pass by, according to the custom of his tribe. As he saw the tiger pass by, he was shocked to see the little son of Shrii Lakshmi Narayan mounted

upon it. He could not believe his eyes, which he blinked and rubbed to make his vision clear, and without doubt it was the same little boy. The tiger climbed the hill with the child riding him and the hunter kept his eyes fixed on them until they were out of his sight. He could not contain this and ran straight to Shrii Lakshmi Naryana's house to narrate to him this strange story. He caught him on his way back from the office and they both proceeded towards home. Prabhat was not in the house. He had not yet returned from the primary school to which He had been admitted. A servant was sent to find out if Prabhat was in the school. He came back with the news that Prabhat had left with the other boys after school had finished some time back, while according to the hunter He was in the forest a couple of hours back. Shrii Lakshmi Narayan, not satisfied with he servant's report went to the school personally and was given the same reply. When he reached back home, he found Prabhat quietly sitting as if nothing had happened. On being questioned about this, He just smiled and said that perhaps the hunter had not seen clearly.

It was not only the hunter and the servants who brought such stories about Prabhat, but even His fellow students and teachers started telling Shrii Lakshmi Narayan and his wife fantastic stories about Him. Some boys followed him one day when he was running towards the forest in the afternoon and they found that He sat down on a grave. They saw Him squatting on the grave quietly for a little while but before long He started talking to someone whom they could not see. This frightened them and they ran back.

This news spread fast in the school and they were afraid of talking to Him. In due course, everyone in the school knew that Prabhat spent hours in the jungle talking to someone that others could not see, while others said

that He could understand the language of the animals and the birds and talked to them. Although overawed by these stories, a group of boys became very attached to Him. They used to wait in front of his house in the morning to accompany Him to school. Shrii Sarkar, unhappy with the stories about his son, felt very happy when he saw how the other boys loved and respected Prabhat. He could not fail to notice that Prabhat was distinctly different from all these boys and that he was treated by all of them as a leader. This was perhaps the only satisfaction and happiness he got from his eldest son who was otherwise so different from His other brothers and sisters. Almost all the teachers in the primary school spoke very highly



of Prabhat. One day, Shrii Sarkar fed up with the unusual and unnatural stories suggested to the Head master of Prabhat's school that He should be detained there after the school was over so that Shrii Sarkar could take him back home with him while returning from his office. This, according to him, would take away the easy opportunity for Prabhat to visit the forest in the afternoon. The Head master refused to accede to his request as it would have a very adverse effect on the other boys of the school. Prabhat was an ideal student of his school. There were no mistakes in His copy books; He never came to school without completing His homework. He remembered well what ever He was taught and, above

all, He was so disciplined and well-behaved with teachers and students that it was impossible for the Head master to find out an excuse to detain Him beyond the school hours. And with this, Prabhat continued to have sufficient free time to visit His friends in the forest who were either the animals and birds or some unseen and unknown persons.

Prabhat also showed great interest in games. He would be present every evening in the playgrounds either playing football or teaching His friends the techniques of good football playing. In the evening, as it was dark the whole group usually came back together. They entered the main road of Keshavpur from a lane. At the junction of this lane, there was a water tap and somehow or other, some water was always trickling out of it. Every time they passed that leaking tap, Prabhat would, with great annoyance, say that it was a waste of public resources and that it should be stopped. He would even ask some of the boys to try to set it right.

One day they saw an old cow licking the trickling water and, to their surprise, Prabhat did not express His usual annoyance at the leaking tap. Just as it was a routine with the school boys to pass that spot at a fixed time every day, it became a routine with the cow also to be present there at that moment Prabhat, however, stopped taking any notice of the leaking tap or the cow till one day when the cow seemingly tried to attack the group. The boys wanted to beat her but Prabhat held them back saying that she was a harmless old cow. The cow somehow did not prove to be quite so. Every time the group passed that spot the old cow was there. She would invariably walk towards the group trying to walk through them. This annoyed the boys very much. Many of them wanted to teach her a good lesson. Prabhat always held them back saying that cows are not meant for being beaten by boys and that this particular cow was a harmless



old cow with no intention of hurting anyone. They all thought that, being a Hindu, Prabhat had some special regard for cows and did not hurt her even though her interference by walking right through the group was extremely annoying.

Once, however, the cow crossed all limits and stationed herself in such a way that the whole lane was blocked. The boys tauntingly told Prabhat that she would have to be driven with a stick today or else everyone would have to wait and pray to the mother cow to kindly make way for them. Prabhat was serious and told them to wait while He went ahead alone. He touched the cow with one of His fingers and to the great astonishment of them all, she started shivering and shaking violently and almost within a moment fell down with a great thud on the ground. Her eyes were wide open and before closing them she made two loud sounds of 'Baa' and 'Baa' before becoming lifeless. The group watched with great curiosity and fright but no one dared speak anything about the most unexpected incident. There was no laughter and no talk after this incident. They all walked back home quietly, only Prabhat knowing whose soul was confined in the physical body of this cow and to what state he had consigned it to now.

The reports about peculiar actions by Prabhat had made His parents look forward to the closing of His school for summer vacations when He could be sent away from Jamalpur. It had become almost a custom for the family of Shrii Lakshmi Narayan to be away from Jamalpur in vacations primarily to keep Prabhat away from the forest and the Valley of Death which was so much frequented by Him. He later on showed the rock on the top of the hill in Jamalpur on which He used to sit as a child and meditate for hours. It was perhaps to this place that the

tiger used to carry Him to save His time. There is also a place called the Death Valley in the forest near Jamalpur. People are ordinarily afraid, even now, of going there alone in the day. It is said that long ago, a company of British soldiers on military exercises in the forest was completely lost in Death Valley. There is a very steep fall from the top of the hill and anyone not knowing the place is bound to fall into the valley and face instantaneous death. The company of the British soldiers had met a similar fate when one after another they fell into that trap, dying instantly. There was no one left to report the loss to the headquarters in Jamalpur for burial of these soldiers.

There is a big neem tree in this valley. Besides providing shade, it makes the valley so dark that even in the day it as dark as the advancing evening. It was an ideal place for sadhana of which Ba'ba' took maximum advantage as the young Prabhat. He was sure that no mortal human could disturb Him there even in the broad daylight of the afternoons. For even now, when much of the forest has been cleared and a sort of path which leads to the neem tree has come into existence, people who have ventured there in groups of four or five have heard peculiar sounds, sometimes the hissing of a cobra, and at other times the chanting of Samskrita slokas. It was here that a good many hours of Ba'ba's childhood were spent and it was to keep Him away from the dreaded place that Shrii Lakshmi Narayan sent Him to His native village, Bamunpara.

In the village He found strange aloofness. The friends of Jamalpur who took much of His time were also not there. He liked the house and another neighbouring house very much as these were thatched in the typical Bengal style, with the roof covering up most of the side walls which made the inside cool and dark. It provided a very suit-

able place for His meditation. He would spend hours lying quietly on His bed and would, on questioning, tell them not to disturb Him as He was seeing the past history of this Universe. At other times He would say He was witnessing the events to happen a thousand years hence.

The family members thought Him to be a daydreamer. The company of the very many other children did not please him. One day His elder sister, who is quite older than He and who usually looked after Him, got very annoyed when He failed to respond to her repeated calls asking Him to come and join them for a meal. She started calling him a waster of time who, instead of engaging Himself in His studies, wasted His time lying in bed and talking nonsense. She said that children of His age could write a letter while He did not even know how to speak His own mother tongue well, for Prabhat was known to be a boy who strangely enough spoke more fluent Bhojpuri and Hindi than Bengali. Although He had picked up Bengali by now very well, the family members always taunted Him for not knowing it well enough. Prabhat was serious. He picked up a copy book, wrote down in the presence of His sister His name in five different scripts and told His sister that she could read only the first line which was written in Bengali script. The second, He said, was Arabic, the third Roman, the fourth Nagari and the fifth Tamil. His sister was dumbfounded. She did not know what to say to this boy who looked so simple and who was always lost in Himself. It was under such circumstances of opposition that He grew out of the primary school and migrated to the High School.

# Ba'ba's Birthday in Hobart

## Ac Jyotiprakash Brc

After travelling all the way South from tropical and warm North Queensland, I reached Southern Tasmania just a few days before Ba'ba's birthday. So I got the opportunity to meet the local Margiis on a very special occasion.

So special was the celebration of Ba'ba's birthday! Around the nucleus of a few experienced and senior Margiis, there are many blossoming new Margiis, some of whom have finished a yoga and meditation course of eight weeks with sister Sundarii and brother Ramakrs'n'a.

The vibration of the 'young' Hobart unit is very sweet and has a very close family feeling. Many children came to Ba'ba's birthday celebration, some from the neighbourhood and some from the margiis' families. Didi Snigda, Didi Yashodhara and sister Madhuri organized the children's programme beautifully.

After the children's programme, we began Akhanda Kiirtan late in the afternoon. The presence of Ba'ba' and His blessing was really felt very strongly during kiirtan and meditation.

When the time came to read Ananda Vanii, His presence seemed to materialize with His words. Even though our beloved Guru was no longer with us physically, everyone felt the spirit of His message to be very appropriate. His guidance and help were felt through the words of the Vanii. We read the Vanii three times in English, then in French, Yugoslavian and Italian.

After the Vanii, everyone was free to express their personal feelings about the Vanii and what its spiritual message meant to them at that moment of their life.

Early in the afternoon of this day, a few people took initiation. As acaryas we felt very happy to give initiation on that particular day.

Symbolically, I offered these initiations as a gift to Baba on His seventieth Birthday.

The day after Ba'ba's birthday, a vegetarian dinner was scheduled for the new people. It was a very successful evening with many spiritual songs, meditation and shared experiences. After a nice dinner, some good games were enjoyed by all. The following Sunday we had a big Dharma Cakra. Twenty-three people attended. At least two-thirds of that number was composed of new people.

For them it was a very new experience. As acaryas, we felt it was quite special to sing kiirtan and meditate with people who have never heard about Ba'ba'. For me particularly,

this was a very new and intense experience. I felt very happy and inspired.

In the crisp South of Tasmania, the warm wind of spirituality was blowing. It was as if the spirit of the Ananda Vanii that we read the day before was finding expression with the Infinite love of Ba'ba'.



*"Go on doing your meditation intensively.  
You will succeed."*

- Ba'ba'



## Secrets of the Heart

I don't know how much I love You  
That secret is hidden within.  
I've loved You beyond heart break and sunset,  
beyond stars and dreams.  
I've sought You out in the grey mists of dawn  
And held You tight in my solitude.

I've touched, caressed and wept for the You  
Who conquered the emptiness of me  
Who, while filling this heart of darkness  
Struck me mute, yet gave me song  
Only to dry my heart felt ink  
Before it hit the page.

And so, with the word caught in my throat,  
My unknown love must journey alone  
Towards reflection.

- Manorainjana



# He Came in my Dream . . .

1

A short dreamwave. I saw Ba'ba's photo to my right in a gold frame. As I looked again I saw Ba'ba' in full physical form. He said, "You don't have to have me with you like that; you can have me with you like this whenever you like for all time."

2

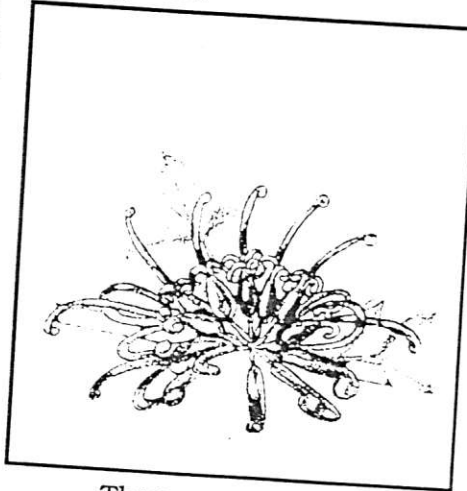
I was at my laokik home in the country. I saw that Ba'ba's body was being carried up the old road towards the barn and house, and I knew that that was the last time I would be able to see Him in physical form. As I approached him, I thought, "Which part of His body will I touch and do pranam?" I then softly touched His feet. As I did so, He sat up, His feet sliding forward and touching the ground. And then He looked directly in my eyes and said, "I am your best friend." Then He did a gesture with His thumb (thumb up) meaning victory.

3

I was standing outside with several Didis. It was in a country setting with very rough terrain. Ba'ba' came out, unannounced, with no one guarding Him, and I wondered how He would walk without assistance on this rough ground.

He stood away from us and we saw that he had a camera and was about to take a photograph of us, like a father likes to

do with his dear children. As soon as we realized that He was going to photograph us, the camera disappeared from the dream. He really only wanted to show us how He loves us as His own children. Then He came closer and got down on the ground with His face down at ground level, looking at us and letting us know we could do the same thing, facing Him and coming close.



Then, as we did this He looked at each one of us and perfectly reflected each of our feelings in His facial expression. When He looked at one Didi, tears began to fall down His cheeks. Internally, He let me know that I could come very close to Him. I came closer and as my cheek touched His soft cheek, His physical form disappeared.

In the next scene, people were telling me to quickly come to the procession, as it was to be very important. I felt that nothing could be more wonderful than

the experience I had just had and I was not at all interested. With more peer pressure, I succumbed and went out to where the procession was to be. Then I could feel that this was going to be something out of this world. I watched as VSS guards appeared in the distance on horseback. The feeling was that this was a most regal event. I saw cars coming; I knew Ba'ba's car would also be coming. I saw His Laokik family members, but they looked as if they did not really belong to the procession with Ba'ba'. Each time, I saw a form I thought to be Ba'ba', I was proved wrong. My position changed and I saw some Dada's and LFT brothers carrying in people who were so disabled that they could not walk. They were in a painful and distressed condition. I realized that they were being brought to occupy the first row of seats to have Ba'ba's darshan.

Immediately, I felt a wave of indescribable love and compassion pass over me as I realized the degree of love He has for the entire universe, especially those who are suffering.

I saw all the preparations coming to the climax, and Ba'ba's approach nearing. Then my focus changed and I saw a very quick but vivid flash: an ambulance. The entire dream ended there, and I awoke with the wave of His infinite Love, permeating my mind.

Didi Ananda Sandiipa

*'At the time of great difficulty, when agony swells people's hearts and they are unable to restrain themselves, the sufferers should say only one thing to Parama Purusa, 'Oh my Parama Purusa the life of my life, give me the strength to endure'.'*

- Ba'ba'

# A Guide to Human Conduct

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

## Satya

Satya means -

*Parahita'rtham'  
Va'unmanoso yatha'rthatvam'  
Satyam.*

It implies action of mind and the right use of words with the spirit of welfare. It has got no English synonym. The word true or truth would be translated in Samskrita as "Rta" (to state the fact). The Sadhaka is not asked to follow the path of "Rta". She or he is to practise Satya. The practical side of Satya is dependent on relativity, but its finality lies in Parama Brahma, the Supreme Spiritual Entity. That is why Brahma is often referred to as Essence of Satya.

*Satyam' Jin  
a 'n a m a n a n t a m'  
Brahma.*

Even though the objective of a Sadhaka is to achieve that ultimate entity, while practising for the attainment, the Sadhaka has to deal with the relativity of his or her surroundings. Man is a rational animal. He possesses in varying degrees the capability to do what is necessary or what is for the good of humanity. In the realm of spiritualism such thought, word or action has been defined as Satya.

For example, a person rushes to you for shelter. You do not know whether he is guilty or otherwise, or you know for certain that he is not guilty. He is followed by a ruffian bent on

torturing him. If this terrified man seeks refuge in your house and the ruffian asks you regarding his whereabouts what should you do? By adhering to 'Rta' or truth you would let him know his shelter. At this, if there is a murder, will it not be correct to hold you responsible for this murder? It may be that your mistake has resulted in the murder of an innocent person. By adhering to *rta* or truth, you become indirectly guilty of this heinous crime, but what would be your duty, if the correct interpretation of Satya were followed? It would be your duty not to reveal the whereabouts of the person and misguide the aggressor for the benefit of the refugee, so that he may safely return to the proper place.

*'Even though the objective of a Sadhaka is to achieve that ultimate entity, while practising for the attainment, the Sadhaka has to deal with the relativity of his or her surroundings. Man is a rational animal. He possesses in varying degrees the capability to do what is necessary or what is for the good of humanity. In the realm of spiritualism such thought, word or action has been defined as Satya.'*

Suppose your mother is taking food. A letter is received about the death of your maternal grand-father. If mother inquires about the contents of the letter, what reply would you give? If you adhere to 'truth', you will reveal the news of her father's death which will cause a great shock to her sentiment and she would not be able to even take her food. It would be preferable in this case

to say that all is well in their family. After the mother has had her food, a mention of her father's illness would prepare a ground for mother to stand the news of the mishap. By this, even though something other than truth was uttered, the dignity of Satya has been maintained.

## Asteya

*Paradravya' paharan'otya  
go' steyam'.*

Not to take possession of that which belongs to others is Asteya. It means non-stealing. Stealing may be of four types:

1. Physical theft of any material - Ordinarily those persons who steal material objects are called thieves. But it is not a fact that only those persons, who decamp with the articles stolen, or fly away with the booty after committing robbery by armed might, are called thieves. By use of brute physical force, arms or by strength of intellect, whatever is taken in

possession, be it money or household effects, amounts to theft, because in such actions there is the intention of taking other's property deceitfully. However, acceptance of any thing in exchange for money or any other thing in a recognized way is not theft (e.g. land in exchange for money, money in exchange for cereals, gold, etc.)

2. The second aspect of stealing is that you did not take material possession of anything or any property, but planned it in your mind. Even then it will be called theft, because the man within you has done the stealing; ~~either fear of law or adverse criticism~~ prevented you from doing the action physically.

3. It may be that you do not take possession of what belongs to others, but you deprive others of what is their due and thus become responsible for their loss. This also is stealth.

4. If you do not actually deprive anybody of what is justifiably their due but plan in your mind to do so. That too amounts to theft.

Some explanation is necessary here regarding the third and fourth types of theft referred to above. You may have seen that many educated persons take to rail journey without purchasing proper tickets. By this they do not directly steal money from the railway administration, but they deprive the railway administration of what is its due. A little thought will make it clear that the relationship of passengers and the railway administration is a sort of barter and, therefore, ticketless travel amounts to theft of the type referred to under (3) and (4) above. Those who travel in a train have obtained the services from railway administration. By

purchasing tickets they pay for that service in full and consequently the railway administration cannot be held in high esteem for rendering a social service. When the railway is not constructed for rendering free ~~services, non-payment of travel-~~ling fare is theft. Think a bit, what a gentleman he is who commits such thefts for a few rupees only. Nevertheless, persons of the type indulge in all types of tall talks, freely criticize the leaders, accuse them of corruption and nepotism. If their shortcoming is pointed out, they plead "it is difficult to live in the world with such strict morality, those who carry on the administration in this manner should be dealt with like this; such a theft is justified." Missionaries or ascetics who convey a divine message; or political leaders who have the noble purpose of doing good to the country are seen in many cases indulging in ticketless travel. This is a daily occurrence. Bribing government employees for evading income taxes and other taxes, or charging travelling allowance in a higher class where journey was actually performed in a lower class are all nothing but cheating. It is not only theft, but also meanness.

All these tendencies for stealing are contradictory to the code of Asteya. In many cases even the men of wisdom often act

knowingly against the principle of Asteya or do not want to take petty stealing to be against it. The author was once questioned by an acquaintance who was a railway employee as to why he had purchased a full ticket for a nephew aged 13 years, when a half ticket might have done (half tickets being permitted up to the age of 12 only).

There are some moralists who do not want to cheat any particular individual, but do not consider anything wrong in cheating the well-to-do or the government. Many a shop-keeper would sell adulterated commodity to the customer but would entertain his own friends and guests with genuine stuff. It should be remembered that all actions with such a psychological background are against Asteya. The easiest way of practising Asteya, as in the case of all other principles of Yama and Niyama, is auto-suggestion. If a person, right from the childhood remembers these codes and explains to him or herself what is correct, she or he will not go astray even in the midst of temptations when she or he grows up; and she or he would be able to maintain the high standard of his or her thoughts and character.

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## *You Came*

*Whenever You saw me crying  
And I thought I wanted someone to rescue me  
You always came Yourself  
You never sent anyone in Your place  
Like a mother, You knew I would not accept them  
Whenever I thought some limited form would do  
You never would give me anything limited  
How You came  
How You love  
How You took me in Your arms  
And yet some days You let loose the rope  
that binds me to You and You allow me  
to roam about in the dark with my eyes half blind  
Why do You keep playing this?  
Now at the end of my days I request  
You to stop this.*

*- Didi Ananda Sandiipa*



## GREAT SAGES

# Henrietta Szold, 1860-1945

### *Brcii Shanti Ac*

Henrietta was a brilliant student, everyone said so. It was clear to all that she was one of those rare people with a destiny. But in the 1870's in Baltimore this destiny was not yet clear.

Her future grew from a rich cultural past. Henrietta Szold was the daughter of a Hungarian Jewish rabbi who emigrated to America the year before Henrietta was born. Three currents thus converged in Henrietta: the devotion of the Jews to their race and tradition, the continental attraction to mysticism and the dynamics of America. These forces were to carry Henrietta far afield over her long life.

What really set Henrietta apart at an early age was her passion for social change. Her desire to help those who were suffering to lead better, more prosperous and meaningful lives. This passion first came to the fore when her father took her to Europe while she was a teenager. Her youthful idealism was stirred when she visited Prague, a vital centre of European Judaism, yet she was deeply shocked by the condition of the thousands of Jews whose poverty trapped them in the ghettos of most East European cities.

While still in her early twenties and working as a high school teacher, Henrietta became a lifeline for the waves of Jewish immigrants who were fleeing repressive legislation in Russia. Many of them went to America. She began a night school for these people to help them become 'Americanized'. Her efforts in this regard were so successful that after four years she was forced to turn her 'Russian School' over to

the State as it had more than five thousand pupils!

Such successes were not uncommon for Henrietta. Her devotion to the improvement of the human condition was matched by an organizational genius of the first order. Her devotion was rooted in a deeply religious nature and her religion gave direction and form to her organizational ability. Henrietta was astute enough to recognize these two facets of herself and set about crafting her organizational skills, and making useful contacts, through a long working association with the Jewish Publication Society of America. At the same time she gave her intellectual and spiritual depth structure by studying at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Henrietta recognized that humanity was her family, and consequently she never married. She gave her all to her mission, working fourteen to sixteen hours a day. By her late forties her health began to suffer because of over work. As a result of a period of convalescence she travelled again and visited Palestine.

This land won her heart. In 1909 Palestine was badly ruled by a corrupt sultan. The soil was impoverished as were its people. Disease was rife. Immediately Henrietta was inspired to establish health and social services throughout the country. She loved Arab and Jew alike and was determined to see that they were given the essentials of life. This was to become her life's work. A work that she had been preparing for, for fifty years.

She spent the next ten years in America raising funds, sending supplies and expertise to her chosen land. When she was sixty she made the move herself, despite a weak heart, and worked for nearly a quarter of a century there. These years were a time of struggle. Frequently she ran out of money and was forced into debt but she was such an inspiration to those who worked with her that on one occasion the doctors unanimously agreed to waive their wages so that the hospital staff could be paid.

Henrietta would travel back to America to raise funds then return to Palestine and travel the country in a wagon or on the back of a donkey working with the poor. She recognized that much of the disease she was fighting was the result of ignorance. Consequently she turned her attention to education and set about introducing modern standards into the school system. She saw the State as a tool for caring for its people and used it to this end. Thus she enrolled the education department in the fight against hunger by introducing the school meal system which ensured at least one good meal a day for the children of Palestine.

Her energy was rewarded. She succeeded in bringing unity to the country, balancing the budget and establishing modern standards in both health care and education.

So it was that, at the age of seventy five, when most people would be considering rest after a long and fruitful life, Henrietta took on Nazi Germany! The year was 1934. She organized and administered the Youth Aliyah.

This organization rescued thousands of Jewish children from Germany, and elsewhere, over the next decade.

These children were educated, rehabilitated and integrated into the community as valued citizens. She established children's villages and spent

much of her time with them, teaching them inspiring songs, checking on their school work, and visiting them at night to sit on the edge of their beds to listen to their worries or tell them stories.

She lived long enough to see the virtual destruction of the

hated Nazi state, dying in February 1945. Hers was a life of intense service and sacrifice. A blend of energy, vision and devotion to God which she expressed in loving service to humanity.

**References:**

Women Saints: East and West.

**Prabhat Samgiita, 1401**

*E kii a'karsan smarane  
E kii udbelata' manane  
Nirbadh man yete ca'y  
Carane madhu ranane*

*(A'ji) harse pa'piya' giye ya'y  
Parasheri sudha' la'gi ha'y  
E kii tanmayata' bhubane*

*(A'ji) la'j bhay hiya' bhule ya'y  
Nirbhay ka'r dyotana'y  
E kii cinmayata' svanane*

*What an attraction in memory  
What a throbbing in my mind  
My mind wants to go without obstacle  
To Your sweet feet*

*Today the Pa'piya' (singing bird) starts singing in joy  
in the nectar of Your touch  
What an intoxication in Your touch*

*Today my heart forgets all shame and fear  
For whom so much fearlessness?  
What an infinity in Your bliss.*

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# A Letter from New Zealand

Dear Friends,

Four years ago, after a personal crisis, I started to look for a deeper meaning in life. I was pretty unsure how to go about it, but thought I would start reading anything and everything I could on positive thinking and visualization. I attended visualization classes and practised regularly. However, I still felt very empty.

Approximately eighteen months ago, I went to a lecture given by an Indian Doctor on Hatha Yoga and was totally inspired. I decided to try meditation. I found that practising meditation without any guidance, however, was impossible. I felt more and more desperate in my search for meaning.

About three months ago, I felt so desperate I went out to the local alternative health centre on a Sunday, hoping the impossible - that they may be there and have a course to offer. I had begged the Supreme Being to help. I knew that when the time was right, a teacher would be there for me, but I was getting impatient. Then, a couple of weeks later, I read in the local paper of the the meditation classes being offered by Ananda Marga.

The first class was amazing. This was it. I felt for the first time that I was coming 'home'. Listening to Caetanya, I felt really great and decided immediately that I wanted to go to the retreat they mentioned. For me, this was unusual. Normally I would argue with myself several times before making a decision.

I felt extremely nervous on the first night of the retreat. Being the eldest sister I thought that I

would be really out of things. This proved to be totally wrong. Never in my life have I been able to be amongst strangers yet feel so relaxed and happy.

I was finally happy, something I had not experienced in a very long time. The workshops were amazing. I was listening to people saying all the things I had always felt. When Didi gave me my first lesson, I had the most amazing feeling of love and peace. The love seemed to pour into my heart. I was on a total high. The next morning's meditation was one of great peace.

Then came the lows. It was amazing as my feeling soared one way and then another. The great thing was that we were all able to discuss this with each other and be protected and guided through with the love and support of the Dadas and Didis. I didn't think I would ever be able to thank these people enough, but maybe through helping Ananda Marga in every way possible and remembering the philosophy, I may be able to help other people find their spiritual path.

I hope I am able to go to India, but if this is not possible, I know I will still have the help and support of the Dadas and Didis. My life will never be the same. Meditation is now, and always will be, a very big part of everything that I do. I have become much more decisive and assertive. But best of all I have had some peace in my life. Thank you all brothers, sisters, Dadas and Didis. I have been given a very special gift.

Gomati